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quälen,' OE. *crimman* 'cram, insert; crumble,' *crammian* 'cram, stuff.'—OE. *crūdan* 'press, crowd,' *geerod* 'crowd, throng.'—So many other words.

We see, therefore, that *terep* 'press, rub, terere' logically gave 'wear away, lack, want' and 'be compressed, swell, thrive; fill, satisfy, etc.' This double meaning, to mention no others, occurs in a number of synonymous bases: OHG. *dringan* 'dringen, drängen, drücken,' MLG. *drange* 'Gedränge; Einengung, Zwang, Gewalt; Not,' *drange* 'gedrängt voll, enge,' ON. *þryngva* 'drängen; anfüllen, anschwellen,' etc.—MLG. *dram* 'Bedrängnis, Not,' OS. *thrim* 'Leid, Kummer,' *thrimman* 'schwellen.'—OE. *þracu* 'pressure, force, violence,' *þrece* 'violence; weariness' (active and passive 'pressure'), ON. *þrek* 'strength,' *þrekaðr* 'worn, exhausted.'—Gk. *τρίω* 'wear away, distress,' *τρίος* 'distress,' ON. *þrúðr* 'Stärke, Kraft.'—Lat. *trūdo*, ON. *þrióta* 'fail; lack, want,' *þrútenn* 'swollen,' *þrútna* 'swell.'

Here I rest my case, and leave it to the unprejudiced to decide whether I have proved (1) that a base *terep*- 'press, rub, terere' existed, (2) that from this came 'wear away, fail, lack, want' and (3) 'be compact, swell, thrive; fill, satisfy.'

I repeat what I have said elsewhere: It is just as scientific and just as necessary to reconstruct a primary meaning as an original form. For a word is not explained at all unless we know how it came to its present meaning. That is the one important thing, and therein lies the chief task of the etymologist.

NOTE. To the examples given above to illustrate how 'thrive' and 'want' may come from the same meaning 'press' add ON. *þryngva* 'drängen, pressen: anfüllen, anschwellen': Dan. *trang* 'Drang, Bedrängnis, Bedürfnis, Armut,' *trænge* 'Mangel leiden, Mangel haben; nötig haben, bedürfen, brauchen,' Norw. *trenga* 'nötig haben, bedürfen.'

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ENGLISH PROSODY.

A History of English Prosody from the Twelfth Century to the Present Day. By GEORGE SAINTSBURY. Vol. I. London: Macmillan and Company, 1906.

Treatises on English prosody usually suffer from one or the other of two defects: the authors either confine themselves to the classification of existing forms, with no explanation of how they came to be, or, if they treat the matter historically, they bring to its discussion certain preconceived theories which the facts must be made to fit. The book before us is free of these defects: it sets out by examining English prosody in its beginnings and in the making; and the author deduces his conclusions from a full investigation of the facts, in which nothing is overlooked, slurred, or distorted. Whether we agree with him or not, we must admit that he has placed all the evidence before us as it has never yet been done.

The difficulties and apparent paradoxes in English prosody arise from the fact that for several centuries two different prosodic systems have contended or coexisted in our verse. But perhaps it will be as well to go a little further back than where Professor Saintsbury begins.

If we inquire what is the *differentia* that distinguishes verse from non-verse, we shall find that it consists in a design of superadded ornament. The nature of this design varies with different literatures and in the same literature at different times, but in all cases it is *definite, symmetrical, and recurrent*. The oldest English verse was founded on a design of two equivalent, though not necessarily equal, sections, carrying four principal stresses, the stresses being emphasised by alliteration. Great freedom was allowed in the use of unstressed or lightly stressed syllables, so that the design, while perfectly rhythmical, was not strictly metrical.

French poets, on the other hand, having an almost atonic language, could not make designs founded on stress alone sufficiently conspicuous, nor did alliteration appeal to them as it did to the northern peoples, so they founded designs upon metre (number of syllables) with terminal rimes as a firm outline to mark the pattern. This was

the system that was brought into England with the Norman conquest. For about a century we are left in the dark as to what effect it had on English verse, if any was written; but about the end of the twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth, we see the new influence, and see also the resistance of the old. The whole thirteenth century and beginning of the fourteenth is a period of contention, of interaction, of submission and of compromise, most instructive to students of prosody. The new principles established themselves, but did not destroy the old. Stress was, of course, unconquerable. Alliteration and equivalence still lingered on, sometimes in abeyance, sometimes in eclipse; bursting out in guerilla warfare in the north and west, much alive in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, buried under ashes at the beginning of the eighteenth, to flash out, to men's amazement, at its close.

This formative and tentative period is here completely set before us, and we can see the germination of all English verse. We see the dawning of new ideas, the experiments, the false starts and the happy innovations, from Layamon, wabbling with the internal conflict of the two systems, who might have asked, like the uncomfortable Rebekah, "Why am I thus"? and received the answer, "Two nations are within thy womb"—to the wooden Orm, to whom equivalence is anathema, and alliteration and rime things of naught; who measures out his eights and sevens with the precision of a joiner, and pegs in his stresses as an upholsterer plants his brass-headed nails—and to the lyrists who, rejoicing in the freedom of equivalence give their song the bird's warble and joyous spring of the triplet. Through all this maze Professor Saintsbury leads us, omitting nothing significant, and giving us the facts from which we can form our own opinion, if we do not choose to accept his.

The fundamental principle he expresses thus:

"There was something in the old material, something antecedent to rhyme, which persevered, and which, uniting itself quite happily and harmoniously with the influence of rhyme itself, gave us what the French have lacked all through their literary history, and will perhaps never fully attain. This was . . . that peculiarity in Anglo-Saxon prosody which interspersed the accented pivots, pillars, or whatever you like to call them, with varying numbers of unaccented syllables. This peculiarity in the old prosody,

and its revival in the new, its partial disappearance again, and its fresh revival, not only in spite of mere disuse, but of repeated well-meant, even still continuing attempts to suppress and extirpate it, show that the national ear, the national taste, the national desire and appetite must have attached some special sweetness and excellence to it."

"Feet of two and three syllables may be very frequently substituted for each other, [but] there is a certain metrical and rhythmical norm of the line which must not be confused by too frequent substitutions."

To these propositions I heartily subscribe.

On one point, perhaps, he verges a little toward dogmatism, and that is when he asserts—as he does again and again, declaring himself ready "to wage truceless war" against all gainsayers—that the "norm" of English verse is not in the stresses or the number of syllables, but in the foot. Here the question naturally arises: what does he mean by the somewhat uncertain word "norm"? Does he mean that the reader or hearer, recognizing the design of the versification, recognizes it as a design of *feet*, and not of stresses or syllables? Or does he mean that the poet has the feet in mind when he composes his verse? This important question does not seem to have occurred to him until the volume was three-quarters finished, when he tells us in a note that he does not hold that "feet, as such, are invariably present to the mind of the poet." This is, to my mind, a very safe position, and he might have added, "nor to that of the reader either." This then would lead to the less bellicose statement that we *ought to scan* verses as feet—an opinion merely, from which some will probably dissent. My notion is that a poet conceives his verse, and his hearer hears it, as a rhythmical period. A composer, fashioning a musical thought into a melodic chain, thinks, I suppose, of the sections and periods, but not of the bars. But the bars are there and must be taken into account, though they are not the "norm" of the melody.

Professor Saintsbury has an ear—a blessing not often vouchsafed to prosodists—nor is he insensitive to the rhythmic phrase; but his preoccupation with the foot sometimes leads him into mistakes. For instance, he very hesitatingly and reluctantly admits the occurrence of the spondee (by which he means the concurrence of two stresses) in English verse. He had only to open his Shakespeare to find it on every page. How would he scan

To be or not to be: THAT is the question—?

In another place he says that “Moore’s ‘shining on, shining on,’ is neither a pair of bad anapaests nor a pair of good cretics, but four feet, two of them monosyllabic.” See what comes of having one’s head full of anapaests and cretics! Then Moore, the impeccable rhythmist, in a passage of absolutely perfect versification, not only gave a violent wrench to his rhythm, but made one line two feet too long for his design, and never noticed it! But when we take the whole passage:—

“There’s a beauty forever unchangingly bright,
Like the long sunny lapse of a summer-day’s light,
Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,
Till Love falls asleep in its sameness of splendor”—

I think there can be no question about *that*!

The author’s method of indicating scansion by vertical divisions is objectionable in that, while it marks the limits of the foot, it does not indicate its nature. Thus he marks

Cristes | milde | moder

and

Ich wel | de ma | re then

in exactly the same way, though he considers the one “trochaic” and the other “iambic”; while on another page, a line exactly like the first, he scans thus:—

Wul | de ge | nu lis | ten.

In complicated metres, and when accents are reversed, this notation is confusing.

And, by the way, I am somewhat surprised that the author has not treated the very important phenomenon of the reversed stress—or what he would probably call the substitution of a trochee for an iamb—in regular verse, *e. g.*:—

Have melted into air—into thin air.

Illumine; what is low, raise and support.

But this, perhaps, he reserves for his next volume.

Professor Saintsbury takes issue—not, as it seems to me, on sufficient grounds—with those who hold that in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries “cadence” was the term applied to unrimed alliterative verses. The two classical passages are in Chaucer and Gower:—

In ryme or elles in cadence.

Of metre, of rime, and of cadence.

Here “cadence” is mentioned as a distinct spe-

cies of versification which was neither in metre nor in rime. If there was such a species, other than the unrimed alliterative verse, he should give an example of it. I know of none. His further argument from the well-known passage in Wyntoun is unlucky, Wyntoun, justifying the poet of the *Geste of Arthure* for using “Empyrowre” instead of “Procuratoure,” says that the latter word would have hurt the “cadence.” Professor Saintsbury, assuming that the poem referred to was the alliterative *Morte Arthure*, says that the substitution of “Procuratoure” for “Empyrowre” would not have hurt the alliteration at all. Well, the line is:

Sir Lucius Iberius, the Emperoure of Rome—

and it strikes me that the substitution of an initial consonant would hurt the alliteration considerably—in fact it would knock all alliteration out of the line. But Mr. Saintsbury overlooks the fatal fact that (on this assumption) Wyntoun distinctly specifies an unrimed alliterative poem as a poem in “cadence.” However, any argument from Wyntoun’s words is futile, as it has been conclusively shown that Wyntoun did *not* refer to the alliterative *Morte Arthure*.

There is a kind of *capriccioso* style in the author’s diction which is somewhat annoying, but it is probably temperamental, and may be condoned; but more serious is the defect of saying very simple things with such peculiarities of phrase and arrangement of clauses, that it takes some effort to disentangle the meaning. Justice Shallow very wisely said that if you have news to impart, “there is but two ways: to utter them, or to conceal them.” Professor Saintsbury at times seems to be trying to do both at once.

But it is more pleasant to praise than to carp; especially when the merits are great and the imperfections small. And I hasten to add that this is not merely the best and most instructive treatise of English prosody that has come under my notice, but the only one that shows a thorough understanding of the subject, perfect candor in the recognition of facts, and a true ear for the delicacies of rhythm—the only one that really explains the history and mystery of English verse.

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